>> Gosschalk: -- read for an hour, fell asleep for 15 minutes, read for an hour.

>> Interviewer: They're ready.

>> Gosschalk: For what?

>> Interviewer: We're ready to start now.

>> Gosschalk: Yeah.

>> Interviewer: Could you tell us your name, please?

>> Gosschalk: I'm Bert Gosschalk.

>> Interviewer: And where were you born, and when?

>> Gosschalk: I was born in 1920 in a little village by the name of Wijhe in Holland, in the eastern province of Overijssel.

>> Interviewer: Could you tell me some about what it was like for your family, growing up in Holland, something about your family?

>> Gosschalk: You mean my parents?

>> Interviewer: Right.

>> Gosschalk: And I as a part of the family, or of my own family?

>> Interviewer: No, growing up, your parents and brothers and sisters.

>> Gosschalk: Growing up. Well, the first few years of my life, like every normal human being, I think I don't remember very much of it. As a child of about two or three, we moved to a nearby town, and that's where I did my growing up. I went there to school and to college, and --

>> Interviewer: What was the name of this town that you moved to?

>> Gosschalk: In Dutch pronounced it would be Deventer, D-E-V-E-N-T-E-R, and it's an old town with a lot of history. It's located on the banks of a branch of the river Rhine. It's a lovely old town, and still, if I think back, that is where my youth was.

>> Interviewer: What about brothers and sisters in your family?

>> Gosschalk: I came out of a family of five. I have two brothers, two sisters. And very rare, what happened to us is that all five of us survived the war.

>> Interviewer: Goodness. Where do you fit in the order of this family?

>> Gosschalk: I'm the second one. I have an older sister who still lives in Holland with her family. I have a younger brother in Holland also. I have a younger sister who lives in Wales, and my other brother, also younger, died a few years ago in Texas.

>> Interviewer: What did your father do for his business?

>> Gosschalk: My ancestors always have been connected somehow or another with cattle, as butchers, as merchants, as traders, or as wholesalers. My grandfather started in the very early part of this century a packing house in the little village of Wijhe where I was born. He had five sons, and all the five sons were in the business also, including my father. When my grandfather died a few years later, they decided to sell the business off, and my father then had his own packing house with basically just buying cattle, butchering and packing it, and then selling it wholesale, primarily in Holland, Belgium, and Germany, in the same city where I grew up. That's where the move came in. And all my uncles were in the same line of business on their own, all packing houses. And the packing house that my father -- that my grandfather started is still today in production now as part

of a larger concern. I was there a few years ago. I visited with my youngest daughter. She got a beautiful welcome there with flowers. But the company still exists; under different names, but it is still there.

>> Interviewer: Would you tell us some about the religious aspect of your family, what it was like growing up?

>> Gosschalk: Well, the first few years, in the little village where we lived, we were the only Jews in town, but I have no memory of it, except what I have heard being told. When I grew up as a young boy in Holland, in the city of Deventer, my parents, like most of the Jews that I knew, were religious, were very religious. My mother kept a kosher home, and all the holidays were strictly observed. I, myself, as a youngster -- every child in Holland has to go to school, obviously; same as here. But school hours were there from 8:30 in the morning till 12:00. Then there was a break for lunch. Everybody went home for lunch. There was no cafeteria in school. There was no way of bringing your sandwiches to school. You had to go home, eat lunch, and by 1:30, you had to be back until 4. That was your school day, except Wednesday afternoon was off, but Saturday morning there was school. But after school, at 5:00 I had to go to religious school every day of the week, with the exception of Friday and Saturday, but you shouldn't be all that happy about not having to go on Friday and Saturday because instead, you had to go to the synagogue on Friday evening for the Sabbath, and on Saturday morning and Saturday afternoon. And then to make it all round, you had to go on Sunday morning from 8 to 12. So I had a very -- I won't call it broad, but thorough religious education.

>> Interviewer: Did you feel any adversed feelings about being Jewish in your town?

>> Gosschalk: Not at first, no. Holland has been a country through the ages of a lot of liberty, a lot of freedom, a lot of easier living. There was no anti-Semitism to speak of, except you felt to be a little different. One is, other kids could go

playing at 4:00 after school; I had to go to religious school. Other kids might have something to eat; I couldn't eat anything unless it was approved by my mother first. I don't know whether you want to have this said onscreen, yes or no. You can edit it out later on if you want to, but I was the only Jewish kid in my class of about 24, 25 kids, and if we had to go to gym or swimming, I was always somewhat embarrassed to undress with all the other kids because I was the only one that was circumcised. None of the rest was, and so there were quite a few kids that were very curious about that and had to have another look at it. That was the only way I found myself to be somewhat different from the rest of the kids; otherwise, no.

>> Interviewer: Well, you were a young adult before the war started. What were you doing once you finished school?

>> Gosschalk: Well, I was still -- I was in school till 1939. Then I started as an apprentice, as a student, almost, in a large packing house, a company of which the president was a close friend of my father's. I was getting in management education there, not only where they're packing meat, but also making sausages, cold meats, canning, but also canning not only meat products but vegetables, fruits, and then start making jams and jellies and things like that, dry soup. From one thing always came another. The same company, however -- well, that's another story. In 1924, two Canadian doctors, Dr. Banting and Dr. Best, invented the insulin to be made from the pancreas of animals. Now, the pancreas, amongst other glands, was always thrown away up to then. Since it is big slaughterhouse, thousands of pancreases every day became available. The company said, "Hey, why don't we start making insulin? It's not licensed. Anybody can do it." And so they started what is today a very large international pharmaceutical concern where I, after the war, started working.

>> Interviewer: How did things begin to change for you and your family when the war started? When did you notice change?

>> Gosschalk: Of course, living next door to Germany, we were fully aware, by newspapers and radio -- there was no television in those days, but newspapers and radio would keep us fully informed about what was going on in Hitler Germany. And we knew it was bad, and we knew -- we saw refugees coming through, people that were fleeing from Germany whether to Holland or to other countries, eventually overseas to England or to America if they could. Many of them stayed in Holland, glad to be away from Germany. We were aware of it, but it didn't touch us. Holland, in World War I, remained neutral, even though it was next door to Germany. Belgium was, of course, was a war theater. So was France. So was Italy. So was Germany. But Holland and Switzerland were two neutral countries, and the Dutch lulled themselves to sleep by thinking, Oh, we'll remain neutral again. Nobody's going to touch us. Hey, we don't want war. Nobody's going to touch us. No, they're not going to come here. On May the 10th of 1940, when I woke up at 6:00 in the morning, I was already behind the German lines. The Germans had already run through town, crossed the river, and we were already over the way further -- we were already then an occupied country.

>> Interviewer: So that was a surprise to you and your family.

>> Gosschalk: Yes. Yes and no. I would say yes. There's no 'no' in there. The education in the years that I grew up and the way children were brought up at home gave children very little initiative on their own to think and to do. You've heard the expression, Children are there to be seen and not heard? That's true. That was very true. At dinnertime, we were not allowed to speak unless we were asked questions. In school -- when I see here the children today, how easy, loose they can conduct themselves with other people, we were not allowed. We were being taught. We were not taught to think. We were taught by rote lessons. We were not supposed to have ideas of our own, and therefore, politically as well as from a social point of view, we were not well-equipped. We were not able to handle these things very easily. Yes, it came as a surprise. It shouldn't

have come as a surprise. We should have been aware of these possibilities, but we didn't think for ourselves. We were just lulling ourselves to sleep with the idea that it won't happen to us.

>> Interviewer: Well, you mentioned that people were fleeing Germany and coming --

>> Gosschalk: Yes.

>> Interviewer: -- to even your town. Did you meet anyone? Were you familiar with people who came?

>> Gosschalk: Oh, yes, yes.

>> Interviewer: Could you tell us some about that?

>> Gosschalk: Well, in the city of Deventer where I lived in those days was a center that was training young -- not only young, but Jewish refugees from other countries into farm labor with the idea they would go eventually to Israel and start developing farms there. Israel -- there was no Israel. It was Palestine in those days, but it was a barren country where nothing was growing. It was infertile. It was a lot of sand, and all these young *halutzim*, which were the young people doing this, were trained there in the hope eventually to go to Palestine to start farming there and convert the arid soil into fertile land. I knew quite a number of those young people because I was already, but was an exception -- at a young age of 16 or 17, I was already a Zionist, Zionism meaning in the sense there that, hey, we would like to have a country of our own which we can build up and live in peace without having to be afraid of outside influence. It is not what it is so often painted to be, a -- looking for the word -- diabolic getting together of Jews of all over the world to conquer and rule. But yes, I grew up with a lot of those young people, and as a matter of fact, my younger brother came to this country because one of his German friends came here a few months before he did and made him come over and --

>> Interviewer: A German Jewish friend?

>> Gosschalk: Yes.

>> Interviewer: That he had met who was a fleeing refugee?

>> Gosschalk: In this organization.

>> Interviewer: But this was in the late ‘30’s?

>> Gosschalk: No. These young people, many of them couldn’t go to Palestine. The British wouldn’t let them in, and then, of course, the war broke out, so they stayed all these years in Holland. He came in ’45 or ’46, and my brother came a few years thereafter.

>> Interviewer: But as far as the refugees who were coming to Holland, was this during the ‘30’s?

>> Gosschalk: During the ‘30’s, yeah.

>> Interviewer: Okay. These people were coming.

>> Gosschalk: Yeah.

>> Interviewer: You want to continue telling us about -- you mentioned on May 10th, you woke up to the surprise of --

>> Gosschalk: As far as I’m concerned, that part of the war was over. We were now in occupied territory, and it took five years to get back to liberation.

>> Interviewer: Well, if you can remember that day, tell us what happened and how did life change for you?

>> Gosschalk: Oh, it was a beautiful spring day. It was gorgeous weather and clear blue sky. Couldn’t be nicer. Well, it was in the 70’s that day, I’m sure, even though we figured it out in Centigrade. But all we saw was the German troops going across the river. The bridge was blown up. The railroad and foot bridge was blown up. The other bridge across the river was a -- what’s the word for it -- pontoon bridge. Don’t forget, in 1940,

automobile traffic was not near as bad as it is today. We were bicycle riding. We were walking quite often, still a lot of horses and wagons around; not that many automobiles. But the pontoon bridge was taken out and ruined so there was no more getting across the river. However, the Germans went through it, and they -- boats, and they fixed it up such a way that they could go across anyway, so you could see their tanks and their vehicles and their soldiers marching across the bridge, going to the western part of Holland

Now, I think a little bit naïve, looking back, the Dutch army was not the best army in the world. All young men of 18 years of age had to serve in the army in those days for about a year and half and get a rigorous training, like making long marches, and they were very poorly equipped. As a matter of fact, there were not even enough guns for them, and the guns that they had dated back from the first -- not from the First World War, from the German-French war from 1870, long, big, heavy guns, and that's -- however, the Dutch were thinking, If we submerge part of the land -- and a good part of the land in Holland has been taken from the sea and is below sea level. If we flood it, the Germans cannot take it. So they flooded that country. The whole war lasted five days. The Germans took a bunch of airplanes and flattened Rotterdam, the major port for Holland and for Europe. They flattened it, and that meant that the Dutch immediately gave up. It is senseless to continue fighting if you don't have anything to fight with.

>> Interviewer: As a young man, did you serve in the Dutch army?

>> Gosschalk: No, because I was in school still till my 19th year, and therefore, I had a deferment.

>> Interviewer: An exemption. Okay.

>> Gosschalk: But after the war, I served for a little while. Not after the war; after the liberation.

>> Interviewer: Okay. Well, how did your daily life change after the Germans occupied Holland?

>> Gosschalk: Well, the first few months, the Germans were too busy with winning a war and waging a war. They didn't have time yet to start with the civil population. But gradually, after a few months, they started tightening up, a little bit at the time, very cleverly done, but it took a while before you started realizing what was happening. First, Jews were not permitted in the movie theaters. Little sign on the -- Jews Not Allowed. From -- a little while later, the Dutch -- well, not the Dutch government, but the Nazi Dutch government started issuing ID cards. If you were Jewish, they put a big 'J' on there, "Jew." You were not allowed, later on, in restaurants. A little while later, Jewish kids could not go to public schools. Jews and Jewish kids could not go to non-Jewish doctors. There was a curfew, but it was a special curfew for Jews. The regular population could not leave the house after 11:00 at night. Jews were not allowed outside after 7:00. Many of these things are negligible. You can live with it. It is only unpleasant.

But the bigger things came a little while later. First, you couldn't have an automobile or a horse or a cart. Then, you couldn't have a bicycle. Bicycles were taken away. We were not allowed to have radio. All the radios were confiscated. Money, any bank accounts that you might have or stocks and bonds had to be deposited in a certain bank, in one bank only, that was being controlled by the Nazis. And gradually, they tightened it very, very badly. Jews could only go to stores, let's say, for instance, to buy vegetables between five and six in the evening, meaning that after everybody else had bought out what was available that day, then you could buy the wilted lettuce or the rotten tomatoes, if there was any.

>> Interviewer: Well, since you had not grown up in an anti-Semitic society, was this a shock to you?

>> Gosschalk: No, not really. It was not a shock because you knew it existed. You knew it existed in Germany. You were told before the war, in the papers and on the radio, that -- what the German Jews were going through, so you knew it was there. It was not a shock. It was only not an easy way of living anymore.

>> Interviewer: Well, how did you feel and respond to this clamping down on your freedoms?

>> Gosschalk: Well, it's quite obvious that you hated anything that was German. The Dutch are not, by and large, anti-Semitic at all. Germans, much more, and then, of course, the Poles and the Russians are very -- and many of the Balkan countries are very anti-Semitic. The Dutch were not. That doesn't mean that no Dutch was not pro-German or pro-Nazi. There was about 2% of the Dutch population was National Socialists, Nazis, National Socialists. Two percent of the population, but that 2% would make your life that miserable. And gradually, as I said, the noose was tightened. In 1942 -- mind you, I wasn't married. I had known the lady who is now my wife already since 1938. We had been dating all these years. We had been engaged, but not having a job -- incidentally, Jews could not have any jobs in any place. There was no income. We were all moved -- and I know I'm jumping from one thing to the next one, but it is part of it. We were relocated. We couldn't live in our own homes anymore. We were told we had to move in a certain area, a ghetto.

>> Interviewer: How did your non-Jewish friends that you had grown up with, how did they respond to this tightening up?

>> Gosschalk: Well, a few all of sudden didn't know you anymore, but most of them took it in stride, didn't pay attention to it. Of course, we had to start wearing a star on our outer clothes too. Anytime we were outside, we had to wear a start, a yellow star, the Star of David, with the name "Jew" in there.

>> Interviewer: You were telling me about the ghetto.

>> Gosschalk: Well, I'll come back to that in a while if I may.

>> Interviewer: Sure.

>> Gosschalk: In 1942, early ’42 -- mind you, we didn’t know anything about concentration camp or slave-labor camp. We had heard some conversation about it, but it was being pooh-poohed. It couldn’t be that. It couldn’t exist. But all information was controlled, so you really didn’t know about it. In 1942, we heard that Jewish young men, unmarried, had to go to labor camps for war production. That was what we were told, and I told myself, Like hell. I think I’ll go -- I got married, but I hadn’t been -- we didn’t get married in the beginning because there was no future for us. We had no income. We had no jobs. We had nothing to look forward to except years of war, and if the war would last, we wouldn’t survive. So we decided to get married because unmarried men were the ones that were called away. So of course, we married in July, late July of ’42, and it was very simple wedding incidentally. I’ll tell you about that also. Of course, it didn’t last very long because three months later, all married men without children had to go to labor camps, so that was -- the only choice we then had is to go in hiding, which we did right then. And I’ll come to the hiding in a little while, but first, let me go back if I may to the wedding.

My wife and I lived in different cities, about four or five hours away from each other. However, she was working in a Jewish orphanage in the western part of Holland. I lived in the eastern part of Holland. Her parents and her home was in the northern part of Holland. Now, Holland is only a little, bitty country, so that east, west, north, and south, it sounds bigger than it actually is. But distances were quite considerable in those days, especially because communications and transportation was not available. So she got a pass to go home for her wedding for three days. That means one day travel, one day to get married, and one day to go back to work. And I got the same three days: one day to travel up, one day to get married, one day to go back to my home. So after we got married, we never even stayed

together or lived with each other. We were only married as a piece of paper so that I didn't have to go to camp. However, after the call came, we had to go in hiding. Then eventually we got together and were in hiding together.

>> Interviewer: So your family, before you got married, your family was forced to live in one of the ghettos?

>> Gosschalk: No. Two weeks later, they would have, but we didn't because just before that time, they were getting ready to make all these moves, and a lot of people had already been moved, but they hadn't gotten to us yet.

>> Interviewer: And so what did you do?

>> Gosschalk: We went in hiding.

>> Interviewer: You left, okay, so the ghettos didn't begin until '42 then; is that what you're saying?

>> Gosschalk: In my town.

>> Interviewer: In your town.

>> Gosschalk: In other cities, especially in the bigger centers like Rotterdam and Amsterdam, it started much earlier.

>> Interviewer: Okay. So that prompted you to do something. Okay. So then after you got married, when did you go into hiding?

>> Gosschalk: In September, October '42. Now, this is maybe not a very friendly way of expressing it, but going in hiding, going underground, there are different ways of doing it. There were people in Holland, many people in Holland, who would gladly help you for humane reasons. They would do it without any money, without any recognition, without any thanks. They were doing it because their heart or their religion or both told them to do so. Then there was a group who would do it strictly for the money, only for the money, to see how much they could get out of

it. It's no different. It's everywhere the same story. There is a group of people who did it, well, in the hope that in the future, when the war is over, this person who is now president of the XYZ company may give him a good job when the war is over. He didn't do it for the money now, but for the possibility later on. Those were three possibilities, and the first one that we went into was a family -- mind you, we had no job, and therefore, no income. This was a family, a husband and wife, no children. He was a plain laborer somewhere. And I don't mean plain laborer as something to look down upon, but as an explanation of what his position was. He did it strictly for the money, and a small home -- we were up in the attic, my wife and I, and didn't get out. Once in a great while, we might, at night in the dark, before the end of the curfew, walk around the block to get some fresh air and then come back, scared stiff that the neighbors may hear and find out because you never knew who a neighbor might be and mention it to the Nazis, the Gestapo, or the SD. It lasted about three months, four months, and it was impossible. The demands on us, they squeezed and squeezed and squeezed.

>> Interviewer: How were you able to pay them?

>> Gosschalk: From some money that we had been able to save. But after three, four months, it became impossible, and we knew that staying there, the demands only would get bigger. They would ask more, and if we couldn't do it anymore, they would gladly turn us over. So we decided to go away from there.

>> Interviewer: What about the rest of your family? Now, you're with your wife at this point. What about your brothers and sisters? Everybody just dispersed?

>> Gosschalk: They all were spread out.

>> Interviewer: So you weren't in contact then --

>> Gosschalk: No.

>> Interviewer: -- with your family.

>> Gosschalk: No contact. In a little village about 20, 30 miles away, we had some people that we knew, and they made arrangements for us to go with another family, a young couple, husband and wife. There was one little child, two- or three-year-old child. He was a foreman in a candy factory, nice people, and they did it out of sympathy as well as money. They couldn't afford not to do it for money because their income was not big enough. So they had to have some money, but they did it primarily because of pity, sympathy, till the man was called away to start building airfields for the Germans. Now the wife is by herself with the baby. She couldn't handle it, and after a couple or three months, that came to an end.

>> Interviewer: Well, could you tell us about how you find out about people, this network? How do you find out who was willing to hide?

>> Gosschalk: It is not a network, but through acquaintances, through friends that you can contact. Mind you, even though I was in hiding, that didn't mean that I couldn't contact, get a message to a non-Jewish friend or say, Hey, we need help. What can you do? Can you meet me tomorrow night at 8:00 on the corner of XYZ Street? And we could talk about it, and we could get arrangements made. But after these two cases, I decided that there's no way that I can some to the end of the war, and I could see the war lasting still quite a bit. While everybody else said, "Oh, the war's going to be over in December," or, "The war's going to be over before Easter," or things like that, I couldn't see the war ending that soon. I saw the might of the Germans, and not knowing what the Allies could put up, I still saw how powerful they were and how they controlled that whole area, and I knew it had to last. Finally I started thinking on my own. The -- I made then the decision, we cannot do it anymore like this. I found somewhere in the woods, away from the civilized world -- excuse me -- a little wooden -- call it a

chalet if you want to give it a big word -- a cabin in the woods. No electricity; no running water, with a pump outside with a well; lights, you had candles or carbide; and for heat, we had a stove. We chopped wood, chopped trees up. That's where we stayed. We had contact then with some people outside who would provide us with rations and with food.

>> Interviewer: And this was just you and your wife?

>> Gosschalk: Yeah. In the beginning, for the first couple of years. And that's how we lived as a husband and wife under a different name, with false identity, but the identity papers, they were so bad. If anybody had looked at it, they would have known immediately it was falsified. Only kidding myself that --

>> Interviewer: Your only contact was with your friends that brought you --

>> Gosschalk: No. I had a first cousin in a little village not too far away from there who was married to a non-Jewish wife. Because he was married to a non-Jewish wife, he was allowed to stay much longer than anybody else. He was legally staying at home and doing things, so we were, through his wife, in touch with him, back and forth, and that's how we got a lot of things done, how we got -- well, clothes, we didn't get, but we didn't need any anyway, no more than what we had. But we got food and the bare necessities. Also my cousin was active in the Dutch Resistance, and of course, before long, I started participating myself. And for a couple of years, I've been active in the resistance in Holland.

>> Interviewer: Well, how did you make this transfer from living in this cabin in the woods to becoming involved in the Dutch Resistance?

>> Gosschalk: That was very easy. Every little village, every little town had a resistance group.

>> Interviewer: Well, tell us more about how that worked.

>> Gosschalk: You got a message, Hey, tonight at 9:00, we're going to go and blow up the city hall in whatever little town it may be. We're going to rob them from their distribution cards or their ID cards, or we're going to blow up a train if we can. So at 9:00 you had to be there and participate. Oh, yeah, you could, if you had good reasons, not participate also, or if there were -- but that's how things were done. It was very unorganized. Almost each group was on its own. And that was also the reason, eventually, why we, toward the end of the war, got caught by the Germans. While it not -- it was only pure bad luck that we got caught. It had nothing to do with anything that we had been involved in.

>> Interviewer: Well, how long did you work with the resistance?

>> Gosschalk: About two years, give or take; maybe a few more. A few more, a few less. We got some good friends through those years. Some were ardent Communists, and the Communists, of course, hated the Nazis. Well, there was a good political reason for them to fight them, and they were idealistic people, very idealistic. They had an idea that the world would be better if everybody lived the Communistic way. Maybe if it had been done the way Karl Marx had foreseen it at one time, it might have worked. Who knows? But some of the Communists were good friends of ours. Some of the very staid Dutch religious people did it out of conviction and became very close friends of ours. No complaints about any of that. It was --

>> Interviewer: Did your wife participate?

>> Gosschalk: No, not much.

>> Interviewer: Was it only men?

>> Gosschalk: Pardon?

>> Interviewer: Was it only men?

>> Gosschalk: No, it was not only men, but it was primarily men. But one of the things, by being involved with the underground, with the resistance, was that if the Germans or the Dutch Nazis were planning a raid in a certain area or for a certain purpose, we got a warning beforehand, and we could disappear somewhere in the woods or underground or wherever. Really, underground, but that's how we were able to survive all that time.

>> Interviewer: Could you tell us some more about your experiences during these two years with the resistance?

>> Gosschalk: Well, it was not much more than an experience in itself. It was just -- it was not a good way to live. You didn't have newspapers. You didn't have radio. You didn't have anything. You had bare necessities to live on. You didn't get out of the woods but except very infrequent, maybe once every two or three months that you might see somebody from the outside, unless there was some action that you had to participate in. It was not much of an experience, except that it was an experience.

>> Interviewer: How often did you participate in these activities?

>> Gosschalk: Oh, infrequent because, as I said, we were in the woods in Holland in a certain part of the country where it is not densely populated and only little villages around there, and those resistance groups were not all that active. And there was a lot of planning going into those things, and if one of those things failed, it meant immediately a raid by the Nazis, and everybody had to lay low for a while before they could dare to come up and think of something else again.

>> Interviewer: Were you ever involved in the planning?

>> Gosschalk: No. Only in the execution.

>> Interviewer: And then at what point -- you mentioned that you got caught. The Germans found you. Do you know how that happened?

>> Gosschalk: Well, yes, I know how it happened. The industrial, the business part of Holland, the heavy populated part of Holland, is the western part. And it's where most of the population lives, where the factories are, all the cities are -- Amsterdam, the Hague, Rotterdam, Delft, all the major cities -- not all the major cities, but many of the major cities are like here, between Boston and Washington, a big industrialized and heavily populated area. It is there the same way. In the western part of Holland is where the concentration of people is. So -- also, that's where the coast is, the North Sea, and of course, the Germans were very careful to protect the coast because of worry of a possible invasion along the coast. So they were digging bunkers all over there and heavily arming the coast so that they would be prepared in case there would be a landing.

Holland is almost cut in half. Not quite, but there is a river, a branch of the river Rhine, the same branch of the river Rhine that flowed through my hometown. It flows north-south, or south-north. And there are only four bridges crossing that river enabling the Germans going by rail from Germany to Holland or Holland to Germany. Three of the four were, toward the end of the war, blown up. There was only one little line left over. One bridge and one little single railroad track was not too far from where we were in hiding. Now, if I lived here -- if there was a little village here and I belonged to the resistance here, there was a little village here, and they had a separate resistance group. The two of them had no coordination between them. The railroad line is here, and we live here somewhere in between.

So one night, the group in this village decided to blow up the railroad track. Unfortunately, the charge didn't go off. Next morning, the Germans discovered it, and they took 8,000 or 10,000 men, and they started combing the countryside to find the

culprits, the men who had placed those charges. Everybody they could find would be arrested. There was no warning coming from this group because they didn't know about it, they didn't know of the attempt, they didn't know what the other people had been doing, and they didn't therefore know that it was discovered. So there was no warning. One morning I was pumping water at the well outside the house, and all of a sudden, I was surrounded. I couldn't get away. My wife was sick, was in bed, was expecting a baby and couldn't get away either, so the two of us were then arrested. However, my commanding officer of the resistance heard, saw, jumped out of the back window, and got away. We had a transmitter going at that time to the Allied forces. We had thousands of ID cards that were stolen. We had tens of thousands of ration cards that were stolen, all hidden in the house, so when the Germans found those, I figured that we bought it.

>> Interviewer: Well, now, I want to go back for just a minute and understand how you transformed from this house -- it was you and your wife at first, and then when you were captured, it was a storehouse for many different things from the resistance, and other people lived there.

>> Gosschalk: No, no other people lived there --

>> Interviewer: You said someone --

>> Gosschalk: -- except for my commanding officer.

>> Interviewer: Okay, so there were three of you that were living there. Okay.

>> Gosschalk: Yeah, at that time. He had to run from where he had been in hiding. At that time, he came to us to stay, to lay low, to be out of sight for a little while, not with the idea to stay with us forever. He had been only with us maybe for six weeks.

>> Interviewer: And how long had you been storing these IDs and miscellaneous things?

>> Gosschalk: On and off. It came and it went, and it went and it came. We had hand grenades, German hand grenades, about two dozen of them stored under the roof. The house was taken down board by board by the Germans, and they found, of course, everything, and that was --

>> Interviewer: And when was this?

>> Gosschalk: This was in January ‘45 -- January, February ‘45.

>> Interviewer: And then what happened that day after they captured you?

>> Gosschalk: Well, let me go back for one second in history.

>> Interviewer: Sure.

>> Gosschalk: In, I think it was September ‘44, after the invasion in France, of course, and after D-Day, the Allied troops marched through northern France, southern France too. They had a landing near Marseilles. They came up through Belgium and in southern Holland. You’ll remember -- no, you don’t remember, but I’m sure you’ve read about the effort that was made. Ten thousand paratroopers were let down in the Arnhem area to enable the Allied troops to cross the bridges. There were three major rivers that had to be crossed -- the Waal, the Maas, and the Rhine -- and they landed just across the Rhine, and they were butchered by the Germans. It was a miscalculation of the strength of the German army by the Allied forces. But in the meantime, the front was now only 25 miles, 40 kilometers, from where we were. The Germans were fleeing in disarray. We saw them going. It was a sight to behold. It was one of the nicest things I’ve seen in my life, is the fleeing of the Germans on horseback, on bicycles, on carts, you name it.

But the paratroopers were beaten back, beaten down, and the Germans rearranged themselves, and they went back to the front a few days later. At that time, southern Holland was liberated and stayed under Allied control. The western, the eastern, and the

northern part of Holland were not, and now comes the cold, brutal winter of 1945. The Germans denied the Dutch any food, any clothing, any fuel for heating. People were being starved to death. Tens of thousands of people died from hunger. It became an extra cold winter on top of it, and Holland suffered terribly in those years, very badly. However, we were still sitting there. We were not getting fat, but we were still eating a little bit, and we still had a roof over our head. When we were caught, we first went to the local police jail. A couple of days later, we were taken to the big German barracks and garrison in a nearby town, about 15 kilometers away, the men downstairs, the women upstairs. I never heard from my wife anymore until much later. While she was there, I didn't know whether she was alive or not alive.

>> Interviewer: Now, this is in what year?

>> Gosschalk: This was in early '45.

>> Interviewer: Okay.

>> Gosschalk: February '45.

>> Interviewer: After you had been caught.

>> Gosschalk: Yeah.

>> Interviewer: Okay.

>> Gosschalk: In February '45, I was then in these barracks in the garrison, which was just slightly out of town. And the Gestapo and the SS had their headquarters in town. Oh, there were maybe a hundred prisoners, male prisoners, in the prison. I was in a cell that was made for one man with 16 prisoners. No light, there was not daylight. There was no artificial light. There was a little straw on the floor to sleep on. There was no water. There was no toilet. There was a bucket. Food consisted of a cup of -- well, they called it soup, but it was not soup. It was boiled potatoes -- boiled potato peelings, no salt, no

pepper, no nothing, just a little potato peelings. They were boiled, and they made a soup out of it. That was your dinner with a piece, a small piece of bread. That small piece of bread, you had to break in two. One you could have for dinner so you had something to eat for the next morning, and you had a kind of a gruel, a watery substance that was lunch, if you were lucky enough. If the SS wanted to question you, and the Gestapo, they would take those prisoners who had to go in for questioning in a truck. Of course, they hand-cuffed them all together and shipped them to headquarters in town, where you had to spend all day on your knees, without food, without water, without being able to use the bathrooms, and the most cruel treatment was doled out there, very, very bad.

We were lucky, if you can call it lucky. I was up there for questioning one day when that day, the Dutch resistance group south of this town where we were knew that the commander of the German police was coming through, and they killed him on the highway. Well, not at that very moment, but eventually he died of his wounds. But they shot him and several other people. As a retaliation, the prison where we were was emptied out and all men taken to that place where this German officer was waylaid and shot to death, right there on the spot. However, I was not there. I was in questioning at headquarters. When I came back that night with seven or eight other men, we were the only survivors. That's how we survived one time. And then a few days later, you could hear the war coming close.

>> Interviewer: So you were the only people left then.

>> Gosschalk: Yeah.

>> Interviewer: In this camp.

>> Gosschalk: Well, it didn't last long because they started bringing more prisoners in.

>> Interviewer: And you had no contact with your wife at this point.

>> Gosschalk: None. I didn't even know where she was or whether she was there. And of course -- she, I found out later, was transported to a Dutch concentration camp. We were in prison, which is different -- there is nothing but cells -- to a concentration camp, which is a different concept entirely. And she was in that concentration camp, didn't know whether I was alive or dead, and I didn't know she was there or if she was alive or dead. However, when the war came closer, the Germans started packing up their stuff and taking their prisoners with them, and after a four-day trip over a distance of maybe 60 miles, traveling only at night so that the Allied air force couldn't see us and strafe us, they brought us to a concentration in northern Holland, in -- yeah, in northern Holland. Of course, I can't say that we were the cleanest-looking or the nicest-smelling bunch of people that ever came off a truck. It was terrible. We were dirty. We stank. We were full of lice and all that kind of good stuff. In the camp, we were unloaded, and one of the policeman, and when I say police, these were prisoners being used as police, as order keepers. A German-Jewish prisoner had been there five years, six years, and recognized me, pulled me out and said, "Your wife is here. She's well. I'll get her for you." So after delousing and steam baths and being shaved from top to toe -- and I'll tell you something. Shaving is not the nicest experience because there was no soap, no brush, and only a very dull, 1,755 times-used Gillette was used to shave your body hair. It was very painful. We got a piece of clothes thrown to us, and that was our uniform. We got our number, not in the arm, but you got a number on the arm. So I found my wife.

>> Interviewer: So this is mid '45, and you found your wife at this camp.

>> Gosschalk: We found each other, but of course, she was in an entirely different part of the camp. Where I was kept, I had to go to work every day. She had to go to work every day. She had to work cutting things for uniforms for the German army. And

first I had to work in the crematorium. Now, the crematorium there was not used -- let me rephrase that. There was a crematorium for burning corpses, obviously, but this was not a destruction camp. Only those people who died for certain reasons were being cremated there, but not cremated en masse like what happened in Bergen-Belsen or Auschwitz or the Polish and German camps. But after I worked there a few days, I was told to go to work on the farm. That meant I had to get up every morning at 5:30, which is no big deal, march for an hour and a half without food to a field, and there, under German guards, of course, we had to work all day long in the open. By 5:00 we had to march back, come back at 6:30, wash up, eat quickly -- whatever there was, if you could get something to eat -- and by 7:00, it was lights out. That was our routine, seven days a week.

>> Interviewer: You mentioned earlier, when y'all got caught, your wife was pregnant.

>> Gosschalk: Mm-hmm.

>> Interviewer: Now, was she still pregnant at this point?

>> Gosschalk: Oh, yes. She was then, I would say, in her early seventh month. We were liberated by the Canadians mid-April, April 12th, and my daughter was born in July, mid-July, so she was in her seventh month.

>> Interviewer: She was pregnant throughout this experience.

>> Gosschalk: Yeah, very much so. Was very big; all water.

>> Interviewer: Did you see her very often?

>> Gosschalk: No, very seldom, but at the end, when the end was in sight, the Germans all of a sudden turned around and became a little bit more thoughtful, a little bit more cooperative, and they knew that if the Allies would ever catch them and they heard and saw what had been going on--